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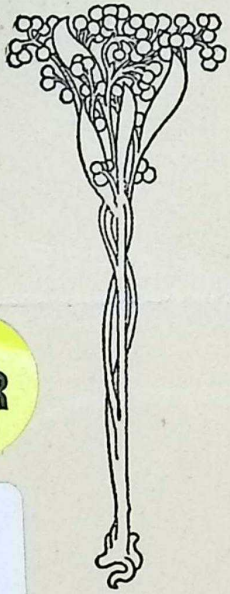
OF

REV. F. P. RAMSAY, PH.D.,

PRESIDENT OF KING COLLEGE



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The first impulse on such an occasion is to review the past of King College; to study its list of ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ODD graduates, MORE THAN HALF OF WHOM BELONG TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY; to consider THE MANY EMINENT men among them, and their achievements, and to inquire into the connection between the high rank its graduates have taken and the training they received here; but the present situation presents a more practical and p r e s s i n g question. The discouragements of recent years have been the occasion of a number of suggestions of what should be done with King College. These suggestions it will be interesting to review.

One of them is the blunt advice to close up the institution. To this there are two objections. One is the fact that no one can be found with the right to close it up. Even if you prove that here is a child underfed and unprovided for, whose death would really be a blessing, it yet remains true that no one has a right to put this child to death. Those who hold the title and control are but trustees, with no authority to divert or to destroy the property. We may put the child to death, or let it starve to death, but to do either would be unjustifiable infanticide.

A second objection to such a course is the probability or certainty that, if we were to discontinue the institution, some other denomination or association would start a similar institution in this city. Bristol is the center of the Holston country,

the great region made up of Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, and parts of West Virginia and Kentucky on the west and north, and of North Carolina on the east and south. No wonder that this region so large, say three hundred miles from northeast to southwest by two hundred miles, so rich in both mineral and agricultural wealth, perhaps surpassed by no region of equal extent in America in the natural resources for supporting a great civilization, so connected together by bonds of industrial, commercial and social interest and unity, growing into a great community in spite of artificial lines of States—no wonder that this region has been nominated as the territory for a new State. While neither of the two great Commonwealths meeting on this line would easily be persuaded to maim itself of a most vigorous and beautiful part, we well may realize what vast community centers here. And when we consider what it now is, what a population is here of the best strain and characteristics of that Covenanter race which, complementing the Puritans and the Cavaliers from England with the best elements from Scotland and Ireland, has done as much as either of them for the liberty and stability, the greatness and glory of this Western Republic, and what a development, material and intellectual, is beginning in this region, the center of the Eastern United States—when we consider all this, we see why either we must continue a college or give place to others who will.

These considerations forbid a second suggestion, that King College

be removed to some other place. These considerations are sufficient, even if the reason offered for removal were not itself a reason for continuing on in the present location. The objection to Bristol is that it is, and is to be, a city, and a college should be in the country; and that Bristol is a bad city. The obvious answer is that Bristol is made up mostly of country-bred citizens. If the country is the place to train boys, why do not the country boys who are now the men of Bristol, make of it a good city? Here is, in part, the explanation: The cities of America are bad, for this cause largely, that they are under the control of a citizenship that have not developed their character in the city. The American experiment, made on so vast a scale, of raising boys in the country and then sending them as men to the city, has not proved an encouraging success for the moral and religious life. The time has come when, as the vast majority of our people must live in the cities, we must learn to train up children and youth in the city so as to make them pure and strong and adapted in character to the complex environment of the city. The problem of Christian civilization is the problem of making the city as pure as it is strong, as righteous as it is rich. And the way to make the city a safe place for our sons to live in is to rightly train them in the city.

If King College has not been altogether successful in this respect since Bristol has ceased to be a country village, it has not been due to the environment, but to lack of adjustment to the environment.

The suggestion has been made, and, to some extent, I understand, the experiment has once been tried, to change the character of the institution so far as to make it a business school. Now, it is well for us to provide elementary courses in accounts and commercial law, as much as all intelligent men need; but there are serious objections to making ours a commercial college. Not only is Bristol already provided for in this respect, but the effort to win patronage as a business school would be an effort to weaken our efficiency as a classical school. Neither is a liberal education a special training for business, nor is a special training for business a liberal education.

More plausible is the suggestion that King College be made co-educational. Doubtless a strong argument could be made for this on the financial side; but there are practical objections that make unnecessary a discussion of the theoretical question. Bristol already has two higher institutions for girls, and none but ours for boys; and we do not wish to come into competition with these sister institutions. Holston Presbytery has a similar institution for girls at Rogersville, and Abingdon Presbytery at Abingdon, and these Presbyteries are not going to make King College a rival to those two institutions. If we had the proper equipment, there would be no practical objection to the admission of graduates from these four institutions to advanced work in King College, thus putting in reach of our young women here the same advanced courses that are elsewhere open to them in a few col-

leges for women and in many co-educational colleges; but we must first be prepared to give this advanced instruction and under desirable conditions.

Instead of spreading out, the suggestion has been made that we draw in, and instead of endeavoring to remain a college become a high school. To this there is a practical objection. As citizens of Bristol, we who reside here must desire the improvement of our public schools, and hence the enlargement of their high school departments. Instead of ten or eleven grades in our public schools, there should be twelve: Four primary grades; four grammar-school grades, and four high-school grades. This advance will doubtless come in time. And while always as now, some will prefer to pay tuition in a select preparatory school rather than send to an overcrowded free shool, we may expect and hope that the difference between the free high school and our preparatory department will gradually diminish. In all the surrounding territory, also, we may hope for the establishment and improvement of high schools. Thus the need for a high school conducted by us will gradually become less imperative. We should therefore make a grave mistake to cut off the college and have only the high school.

Nor can we go to the other extreme and try to be a university. What may be advisable in the distant future, one may please his fancy with imagining; but the realities of the present forbid all thoughts of trying to be more than a college, a regular college.

Or to be more particular, King College is shut up to being a small classical college for young men. Such an institution is needed here; such an institution has no rival here; and such an institution has no Presbyterian rival in all this region.

Having determined that our institution is to be a college, a regular college, let us consider more fully what this means materially, intellectually, and spiritually.

On the material side we have to ask two questions—what we need and how to get it.

The material needs of such an institution are, first, a site. This we have in a most beautiful campus of four or five acres. This is sufficient for the present, but it should be our settled policy to sell off no more, but at any opportunity to buy in.

Such an institution needs buildings—lecture rooms, a study hall, a library, laboratories, dormitories for students, a refectory, a gymnasium, halls for student organizations, and residences for the faculty.

Lecture rooms or recitation rooms, which are an obvious necessity, we already have sufficient for the present.

A study hall is necessary, and must be used in the future more than ever in the past. For students that live outside of the college we must always provide some place for study between recitations. And as long as so much of our work is with preparatory students, we must have them, with exceptions, to study under supervision. Every efficient preparatory academy makes diligent use of the study hall, and we cannot expect to get the best results in the

way of study if we do not use the best means. Now, the study hall we already have; but we lack furniture, especially study desks. There is a pressing need for the proper equipment of our study hall.

We have also a library and some thousands of desirable books; but there is pressing need of means to provide for the keeping of the library open to the students at all times, and for the purchase of a few periodicals and of a few books from year to year. It would be a great step forward if we could have a suitable library building, with endowment sufficient to provide proper attendance and constant additions of periodicals and books; and it would be a distinct advantage to the college if this library could be made accessible to the public as well as to the professors and students. To make the college a servant of the city is little less important than to create and direct in the students the habit of using a good library.

We need laboratories. We have fairly good apparatus for the experiments that a professor needs to make in elementary physics and chemistry, but we have as yet no provision for a student's doing laboratory work, a necessity to the proper teaching of modern science. We need, then, a science building, equipped with scientific apparatus, provided with laboratories for students, and supplied with specimens; and this need is urgent.

Sufficient dormitories for the present we already have, and a refectory kitchen and dining hall that will serve for a beginning; but the need

is urgent for a separate building containing a dining hall and kitchen and dwelling rooms for a manager and his family. A refectory operated at cost and providing for the students wholesome food at a low rate is necessary, both to bring the expenses within the limited means of many, and to make possible the proper discipline and social culture.

Urgent also is the need of a gymnasium. This would require a building. The new library, science hall and gymnasium might all be in one building, but none of these can be adequately provided for in the present building. The gymnasium is greatly needed for physical exercise with a view to health and the physical conditions of study; but other ends it would also promote, such as clean morality and good comradeship. We may hesitate to encourage intercollegiate athletics, with all the waste of time and other evils hitherto found attending them; but there can be no question of the value of a good gymnasium properly used.

Halls for students' organizations are needful in a college community. For two literary societies we already have fine halls, and with a little means we could equip a hall for the College Y. M. C. A. Outside the organization for athletic games, other organizations are not now needed or desirable.

We need residences for the president and other professors, and they should be grouped around the college. This is necessary as a condition of creating and fostering a community life of the institution, and promoting the social culture of the

the city, we should omit no condition that will develop what I am calling community life, uniting the professors and students in a community of their own. I would not isolate the college from the city, but I would make it a community within the larger community; and to this end these rseidences grouped around the college are a necessity.

Besides grounds and buildings, a college needs scholarships. They should be of two kinds, some to aid worthy and needy students, and some to be awarded for superior ability and scholarship to young men of fine character. If we had as many as even ten scholarships of each, ranging in value from tuition to full support, we could, by carefully appropriating them, aid many young men to a college education who would otherwise never be able to obtain it. It is practically true in this country that any young man of health and ability, and free and willing to give his time to it, can get a college education; but this would not be true but for the existence of so many sources of help in connection with the colleges. And some scholarships awarded on the mere ground of superiority would enable us to keep alence side, a strong course in matheways a superior class of young men among the students, to the immeasurable uplifting of the whole student body. We must labor to secure as soon as possible scholarships of both kinds.

Besides the improvements in equipment which I have suggested, and which would all cost about $40,-

ive endowment. A college located as we are should be able to pay its faculty an average of $1,500 a year in salaries, and for the best work should have about one professor to each fifteen or twenty students. This means that about one-half of the salary fund should come out of the increase from the endowment. In other words, the income from the endowment should be about from $4,000 to $5,000, which means an endowment, say, of $90,000, or $70,000 needs to be added to the present endowment. This would enable us to keep, say, six efficient men in the faculty, men of the highest scholarship, character and efficiency, and, when we found a specially good man, to keep him.

In other words, with a plant worth $50,000, and an endowment worth (counting the scholarships) $100,000, we should have a sufficient equipment for what we call a small college. Something like this we must get, in order to fulfill our mission as a college.

How are we to get this? How are we to add from $100,000 to $120,000 to our present property? By doing three things. The first and most important is by doing thoroughly good work with the means already in hand. We must do such superior work as will satisfy our own academic conscience. Until the college by deserving it can count on the patronage of its own curators, and of the ministers and elders that really own and control it, we may not expect patronage or gifts from others. And not only must good work at the

the board must exhibit such interest and wisdom in management as will convince judicious givers that their gifts will be well applied. This is the first condition of obtaining gifts: By board and by faculty such administration and discipline and teaching as deserve the gifts.

The second thing to do is to create and demonstrate the confidence of our own people by securing not only their patronage, but also their gifts. We must not despise the small gifts of the many. Throughout these Presbyteries in our different churches we must gather the small gifts from one dollar up. Many small gifts will make up what will seem to us a large sum; and, if we obtain these gifts by such methods as will not offend the givers, we shall have in them interested friends.

From gaining the favor and the gifts of the small givers, in one word, by creating and demonstrating the friendship and interest of our own people, we may turn to others of larger means, and reasonably and hopefully ask them to investigate our claims to their beneficence.

By doing good work at the college, by getting small gifts from many of our own people, and by getting large gifts from a few outside, we may gradually improve our equipment up to what it needs to be. But neither can we expect to do this at one stroke, nor ought we to wish to obtain these gifts except from those who willingly give upon a fair presentation of the evidence, for even to a college friendship is worth more than money.

Turning from the material side to the intellectual, we have three things to consider. First in importance is the teachers. They should be men who are masters of the subjects which they undertake to teach, who have the faculty of communicating knowledge, and who have the still more important power of arousing their pupils to intellectual effort. Besides all this, a professor in a college should be a lover of learning, living himself the intellectual life, and helping to create an atmosphere of intellectual culture. Moreover, in every college faculty there should be at least one man, if possible two or more, who are so eminent in gifts and acquirements as to inspire the student with admiration for their intellectual greatness and achievements. To these qualifications should be added in all the professors characters of the highest order, that is, Christlike characters.

How are such men to be secured? The first condition of getting such a faculty is to get a permanent president in whom the Board of Curators have confidence, and virtually leave the selection to him, reserving only a veto power. This is the most delicate and difficult part of the conduct of a college. No set of busy men can give the necessary time to it. The available men must be sought for and studied, and each man selected for his ascertained special fitness. The president must have real responsibility, and be really independent, free to exercise a discriminating judgment, aiming solely at the best good of the institution. Him the body of curators must study, and, if he

proves incompetent, remove; but a body of busy men and good men, no one of them being largely responsible, is too easily manipulated.

Next to the teachers is the curriculum of studies. The two essentials here are comprehensiveness and coordination. To be comprehensive, the course of study should embrace in due proportion the seven great branches of knowledge: On the science side, a strong course in mathematics, a good course in physical science proper, including at least physics, chemistry, geology, and astronomy, and at least an elementary course in some art, say drawing or bookkeeping; on the rational side, a course in the foundations of philosophy, including at least psychology, logic, ethics, and metaphysics proper, a good course in the study of man as seen in history and in society, and large courses in language and literature, including, besides a mastery of English and acquaintance with literature in English, a study of Latin, Greek, German, and French; and, to complete the system of liberal culture, there should certainly be large acquaintance with the Scriptures and the Christian religion. And the stdudies making up this comprehensive whole should be so co-ordinated, and be made to come in such order and relation as to grow in the developing mind into a system of knowledge held by a symmetrical intellect. The exact proportions of the different studies may vary, and selection of subjects may be had with advantage, provided the selection gives a good place to each of these

seven departments of knowledge and does not violate correlation of studies.

A distinct word must be said on the length of the curriculum. The amount of work required for A. B. in a regular college should be four sessions of not less than thirty-five weeks of full study each, or a full four years of the work of a good average student. This should be added on to twelve such years of student work: Four in primary school, four in grammar, and four in high school. That is, with a proper standard the average boy going to school all his minority would not get his diploma before he becomes of age. Fully realizing that neither King College has this standard now, nor any institution in this region, so far as known to me, I believe that we ought to work toward this standard until A. B. from King College will represent as much work as A. B. from Johns Hopkins or from the University of Virginia. If I understand the situation right, the place of this institution is not in competition with institutions that give A. B. for two years of work added on to a high school course, but for a four years' course added on to a high school course. If we can have this standard and live up to it, we can uplift education in all this region.

By the side of the faculty and curriculum, I would place as an indispensable element in such a college a high standard of grading the work done by the students. Let me illustrate what I mean, taking arithmetic as a subject familiar to most of us. If a student misses three examples or

three questions of average difficulty out of ten, I would give him 70 out of a maximum of 100. If another student misses seven out of ten, I would mark him 30. If he missed only one, I would mark him 90. I would make mark range from 0 to 100 in exact proportion to that degree of knowledge and skill that the ideal student would show at the stage at which he is arrived at the time. To give a student 98, or even 90, when he misses one fourth of what he ought to know, is just as false and fatal as to give him only 20 or 30.

Grading the students in the exact ratio of what they know to what they should know, I would set up as the passing standard 75 on a comprehensive examination in the subject, and let the institution resolutely refuse to grant a student a certificate of having passed in any subject until he demonstrates this degree of mastery in a comprehensive examination.

Not only so, but I would fix it and enforce it, that a student falling below the passing mark in his general average must either at short intervals show improvement in his grading or withdraw from the institution. In other words, I would make and keep the college a community of students in the true meaning of the word, a world in which the individual shall find it the custom to study hard.

Once let us have such a spirit and standard of study and attainment, once make the college a studious community, once let people know that to attend King College means

to be really a student under competent teachers, and we shall then need to have no further anxiety about getting patronage or endowment.

Gentlemen of the Board of Curators, this King College must become or die in the attempt, or else it will die for want of the attempt.

Do not, however, let me make the impression that the aim of the college is intellectual. The aim of the college is character. The college aims at making character in connection with intellectual training. For this reason, above all others, a low standard of study is to be condemned in a college, because it means unfaithfulness. Nobility of character and idleness as a student are contradictory terms. The youth in college who does not study well is refusing to obey God, who gives him mind and commands him to improve it, and is wronging men, whom he could become capable of serving. A set of pious students unfaithful as students is a great satisfaction to the enemy of true piety, being essentially hypocritical.

On the other hand, no mere intellectual success can make a college a blessing, if the intellectual is antagonistic to the spiritual. How, then, shall we promote the spiritual life of the college?

I answer, first of all, not by having good men as professors, not by chapel worship, not by Y. M. C. A. work, but by discipline. The primary virtue is respect for authority. This is the first duty of the child toward its parents, and the first duty of men toward God; for the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom. Chil-

dren should learn to obey, and men should never forget to obey. Respect for the authorities set over us is respect for the authority of God, who has set up these authorities over us. If, then, we are going to make of King College a place to train character, we must have therein and maintain therein respect and obedience to authority.

And let us note the nature of college government. It is not civil government, relying merely on force, nor ecclesiastical government, relying merely on persuasion, but parental government, relying on both persuasion and penalty. It is parental government. The college must therefore be like a family, in which the children think of no appeal from the father. Like the family, the college must aim to train to self-government, gradually conducting the students into self-government, but never abandoning the sacred duty of control as far as control is necessary. And like the family, the college is an institution of love; and love must prompt every exercise of authority. This personal, parental government is the most difficult of all; for the best is always the hardest. A military school for boys may be, and often is, a parental school, as every school should be; but a school whose discipline were merely military would have at once the easiest and the worst discipline. Or to say that the best system is simply to put boys on their honor is often to say a grave error in a plausible form. Honor was for ages the guardian of murder by the duel; honor is today the code of

the gambler. We want our boys to have the honor which means truthfulness, obedience, reverence.

When once the college is not a party of idlers or a pleasure club or an ungoverned crowd, but a community of diligent students, and when this community of diligent students is cheerfully respectful and obedient to authority, as children under parental love wise enough and strong enough to govern efficiently, then the college has the fundamental conditions of character formation, of spiritual development.

Two other conditions must be added to these. Inside this college community the dominant personal influence must be that of Christlike men. (For it is avoiding scientific precision to use such epithets of character as disbelievers in Christ might use, when we know that, scientifically speaking, character cannot be right unless it is Christlike.) This means that the teachers and a large per cent. of the students, especially of those who stand high as students, must be Christlike men. We must search for and bring to the college young men of earnest piety. It is an immeasurable advantage to have a large proportion of earnest young men studying for the ministry. And it would be a calamity if we should get here an able faculty without vital piety, and so change our curriculum and discipline as to repel young men of genuine piety. King College, to speak exactly, belongs to Christ, and this fact should permeate the community consciousness of the institution.

The other additional condition is adjustment to environment around

the college. In this environment are certain evils especially dangerous to young men. To put the truth on this point in one word, if King College would draw boys here to educate them, she must know how to keep these boys within the college grounds at night, certainly as long as Bristol is the home of the saloon and its sister evils.

On the other hand, we cannot make of our students workers in the church by shutting them out of church work. They must enter into the religious life and work of our city. And as they must live in society, they should be now learning how to live in society. The normal and healthy life of young men includes their association with young women, and a most desirable part of their culture should come from association with refined and cultured young ladies and their mothers.

Here I am dealing with the most difficult question in the whole problem of King College: How to train our students to pure and wholesome life in a city, getting for them the advantages of our environment while saving them from its perils, and at the same time to develop in the college of professors and students that community life, social and religious, so necessary to make the college in the highest degree efficient in educating its students. I believe the problem is capable of solution, and that the right solution of it will give us a college of the best type possible in the modern world, uniting the intellectual and the spiritual, the social and the educational, scholarly study and practical activity.

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THE Administration of King College desires the addresses of young men and boys that might possibly be brought into either the College or the Preparatory Department next year or in the next few years, and the addresses of their parents. It especially seeks for youths of good character and ability who are willing to study.

Send addresses, and write for catalogue and all information, to

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